

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-4, 7-11, 14, 15, 18, 19, and 22-31 are pending in the present application. Claims 5, 6, 12, 13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, and 25 are canceled. Claims 27-31 are added. Claims 1, 11, 15, 19, and 23 are independent.

Claim Objections

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 2 and 11 for informalities. Applicants respectfully submit that that these claims have been amended in order to correct the informalities identified by the Examiner. Thus, withdrawal of these objections is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,924,464 to Baylock (hereinafter "Baylock"). This rejection, insofar as it pertains to the presently pending claims, is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Independent claims 1, 11, and 19 each recite the following: receiving bits in a parallel signal, converting the parallel signal into multiple serial signals, and adding stuffing data to the received bits so that the number of converted serial signals multiplied by the second bit rate is equal to the first bit rate. Applicants respectfully submit that Baylock fails to disclose these features.

In page 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner admits that Baylock fails to disclose adding stuffing bits to the serial signals so that the number of transmitted serial signals times the second bit rate is equal to the first bit rate. However, the Examiner also asserts that U.S. Patent No. 5,040,170 to Upp et al. (hereinafter "Upp") discloses bit stuffing when SONET signals are created. The Examiner cites column 7: lines 61-68, and column 8: lines 1-6 of Upp to support this assertion.

Applicants respectfully submit that Upp fails to disclose adding stuffing data (e.g., zeros or other "dummy" bits) to a serial signal converted from a parallel signal. Instead, the portions of Upp cited by the Examiner discloses DS-3/SONET converter 1200 that converts a DS-3 signal into a format suitable for transmission according to the SONET protocol. This conversion is performed either by inserting the DS-3 signal into a SONET formatted signal, or, alternatively, inserting the component parts of the DS-3 signal into multiple SONET formatted signals. Although Upp describes this insertion as "stuffing" the DS-3 formatted data into a SONET format, Upp fails to disclose actually adding any type of stuffing data to the DS-3 bits that are inserted in the SONET formatted signals.

Furthermore, Upp fails to disclose that the resultant SONET signal is generated as a result of parallel-to-serial conversion.

Thus, Applicants submit that neither Baylock nor Upp disclose the addition of stuffing data to serial signals converted from a parallel signal, such that the number of serial signals multiplied by their transmission rate is equal to the rate of the received parallel signal, as required by independent claims 1, 11, and 19. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 11, and 19 are allowable. Applicants also submit that claims 2, 14, and 22 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on claims 1, 11, and 19.

Independent claims 15 and 23 each recite that stuffing data is removed from at least one of multiple serial signals during a conversion where the serial signals are converted to a parallel signal, such that the number of the multiple serial signals multiplied by the first bit rate (i.e., the rate at which the serial signals are received) is equal to the second bit rate (i.e., the bit rate at which the parallel signal is transmitted). As admitted by the Examiner, Baylock fails to disclose such a feature. Although the Examiner relied upon Upp to disclose the use of stuffing data, Applicants respectfully submit that Upp's system does not add or remove stuffing data from any stream of data. Rather, the portion of Upp relied upon by the Examiner only discloses the "stuffing" (i.e., insertion) of DS-3 data into a SONET format. Upp, therefore, fails to disclose the addition or removal of stuffing data to a converted signal, as required by claims 15 and 23.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 15 and 23 are allowable. Further, Applicants submit that claims 18 and 26 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on claims 15 and 23.

Claims 3, 4, 7-10, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baylock. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's proposed modification of Baylock to use SONENT data fails to remedy the deficiencies discussed above with respect to independent claims 1, 11, 15, 19, and 23. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3, 4, 7-10 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on the aforementioned independent claims.

Claims 13, 17, 21, and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baylock in view of Upp. Without conceding to the validity of any of the Examiner's prior art rejections, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims have been canceled, and similar subject matter has been inserted into their respective base claims. Applicants further respectfully submit that, for the reasons discussed above, the combination of Baylock and Upp fails to either anticipate or render obvious these independent claims.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the various claim rejections. Accordingly, Applicants earnestly seek a Notice of Allowance in connection with

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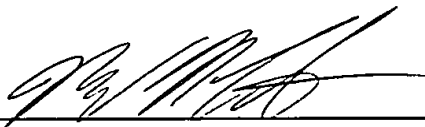
the pending claims. Should the Examiner determine that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Jason Rhodes (Reg. No. 47,305) at the telephone number of the undersigned to discuss this application.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petition for a one (1) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$110.00 is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner of hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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